



Louisiana Public Defender Board Strategic Plan FY 17-22

Mission:

In pursuit of equal justice, the Louisiana Public Defender Board advocates for clients, supports practitioners and protects the public by continually improving the services guaranteed by the constitutional right to counsel.

Through its commitment to performance standards, ethical excellence, data-driven practices and client-centered advocacy, the Louisiana Public Defender Board oversees the delivery of high quality legal services affecting adults, children and families, and supports community well-being across Louisiana.

(adopted by the LPDB Board of Directors on April 24, 2010)

Vision:

The Louisiana Public Defender Board (LPDB), a recognized leader in the delivery of client-centered legal representation services, is a dynamic and engaged partner in local, state and national criminal and juvenile justice systems.

LPDB and its public defender offices prevent wrongful conviction, protect due process and constitutional rights, increase public safety, promote fiscal responsibility, and support economic growth throughout Louisiana.

Philosophy:

- The belief that access to justice shouldn't depend on how much money is in your pocket, or which side of the parish line you are arrested
- Compliance with the Louisiana and U.S. Constitutions guaranteeing a meaningful right to counsel

- Belief that a strong public defender system improves the performance of all other criminal justice and social service systems, promoting public safety while protecting fundamental civil rights and liberties
- Belief that rehabilitation, treatment opportunities, support services, and community-based programs are the juvenile justice system's obligation to support the potential of children
- Respect for the inherent dignity of all clients
- Respect for all practitioners providing the admirable public service of delivering legal defense for indigent persons accused of crime
- Promotion of policies that promote adherence to the canon of ethics and rules of professional conduct for lawyers
- Promotion of policies that support client-centered defense delivery
- Equal dedication to all clients, regardless of charge or charge category (delinquency, misdemeanor, felony, capital appellate, post-conviction, FINS and/or CINC clients)
- Commitment to data-driven, evidence-supported best practices in public defense delivery
- Collaboration with other criminal justice agencies, social service providers and national partners
- Participation in local, state and national criminal justice research and policy-making
- Attainability of fairness in court proceedings for defendants, victims and the Louisiana public
- Transparency in agency decision-making and programs
- Responsible distribution, supervision and regulation of all tax funds dedicated to public defense delivery
- Creation and maintenance of a positive work environment where workload is manageable, all staff are valued, innovation and creativity is encouraged, and leadership is demonstrated by example

Statement of Goals:

- 1) LPDB will attain adequate budgetary and other resources that are essential for the delivery and supervision of high quality, ethical legal defense representation services on behalf of LPDB's indigent adult and juvenile clients throughout the State of Louisiana.
- 2) LPDB will cultivate a technology proficient defender community that utilizes up-to-date, data driven practices in its case management and systemic advocacy.
- 3) LPDB will create a statewide training system that develops, promotes, and supports the delivery of effective, high quality services.

- 4) LPDB will develop, cultivate and support leaders in each district office that share and promote LPDB's vision of standards-based, community oriented, data driven and client-centered legal representation, while respecting local variances in defense delivery mechanism.

Objectives and Strategies:

Goal #1: LPDB will attain adequate budgetary and other resources that are essential for the delivery and supervision of high quality, ethical legal defense representation services on behalf of LPDB's indigent adult and juvenile clients throughout the State of Louisiana.

Objective 1-1: Develop an accurate assessment of the resources required to ethically and professionally fund the public defense function in Louisiana.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Submit a budget request that adequately funds services for Child In Need of Services (CINC) parent representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Pursue federal, state and private funds, to double the capacity (either staff or contract) in the state office in order to provide one-on-one financial and case data support, training, supervise-defender performance and improve communication between LPDB and the field. R.S. 15:152(B)(6) and 15:152(B) (10). | FY 17-22 |
| Establish a case-weighting analysis that assesses the needed resources (both human and financial) to ethically provide the right to counsel. R.S. 15:156(B)(2). | FY 17 |
| Promulgate workload standards from case weighting analysis. | FY 17-22 |
| Actively monitor caseload/workload of all district public defender offices and contract programs. R.S. 15:156(B)(2). | FY 17-22 |
| Actively monitor juvenile caseload/workload within all district public defender offices and contract programs. R.S. 15:156(B)(2). | FY 17-22 |
| Collect and analyze data regarding staff, salary, experts, and ancillary services on an annual basis. R.S. 15:148 (B) (12) and 15:148(B) (16). | FY 17-22 |
| Each year, document public defender caseloads/workloads by district against best national and/or local performance standards as they relate to caseload/workload. R.S. 15:152 (B)(3). | FY 17-22 |

Objective 1-2: Implement reforms to improve the efficiency of the delivery of public defender services and maximize allocated resources.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Develop a state plan for the method of delivery of capital defense services at the trial level to pursue cost-efficiency and improve quality of services, and ensure that all district capital plans conform to the state plan. R.S. 15:169(A). | FY 17-22 |
| Provide the Louisiana Sentencing Commission with regular, accurate data that supports the reclassification of offenses that clog the criminal justice process, accelerate community deterioration and do not pose public safety threats. | FY 17-22 |
| Regularly convene an engaged "Policy Committee" within the LPDB Board of Directors to recommend policies (for full Board approval) that promote the efficiency of public defense delivery. | FY 17-22 |
| Ensure appropriate workload in each of the capital contract programs. | FY 17-22 |
| Leverage the resources of the private bar in Louisiana to assist in the delivery of effective, high-quality public defender services through outreach and training. | FY 17-22 |
| Create a diverse network of public defender allies across the criminal justice and social service systems in Louisiana to emphasize the need for collaboration and innovation for specific criminal justice reforms. R.S. 15:147(C)(2). | FY 17-22 |
| Participate in criminal justice association, society, and task force and commission meetings. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 1-3: Effectively maintain and expand the LPDB budget to ensure incremental budget increases until adequate resources exist to achieve ethical and professional caseload/workload compliance.

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Proactively monitor and respond to media related to public defense in Louisiana and systemic issues in the criminal justice system. | FY 17-22 |
| Annually, facilitate meetings between the State Public Defender and state-level legislators to promote an identified plan. | FY 17-22 |
| Support local district's efforts to generate increased local revenue to support the delivery of public defense services. | FY 17-22 |
| Annually, develop and submit an annual LPDB budget request to Division of Administration that reflects data-supported resource needs for defense services | FY 17-22 |

Objective 1-4: Improve the quality of public defense services for clients.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|
| Develop and promulgate Investigator Performance Standards. | FY 17-22 |
| Provide job descriptions and practice procedures and other support for mitigation specialists working or contracting with public defender offices/programs. | FY 17-22 |
| Develop meaningful performance review for 25% of all District Defenders prior to contract renewal. | FY 17-22 |
| Utilize the Louisiana Justice Coalition to procure funding for innovative direct and indirect services for clients. | FY 17-22 |
| Develop and promulgate Louisiana performance standards for representation in appellate cases (excluding post-conviction), and support the ongoing evaluation of the utilization of these standards in the field. | FY 17-22 |
| Support the ongoing evaluation of the utilization of the Louisiana performance standards for capital representation in the field. | FY 17-22 |
| Develop the CMS to incrementally assess district 'quality of service' performance. | FY 17-22 |
| Develop, circulate and provide training on advocacy related to collateral consequences of a criminal conviction in Louisiana. | FY 17-22 |
| Evaluate utilization of Louisiana Trial Court Performance Standards for representation in the field. | FY 17-22 |
| Evaluate utilization of Louisiana Performance Standards for Representation in Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases in the field. | FY 17-22 |
| Evaluate utilization of Louisiana Performance Standards for Representation in Delinquency Cases in the field. | FY 17-22 |
| Create and maintain an appropriate online resource for LPDB staff and defenders in the field that allows them to access materials (practice advisories, recent rulings, etc.) and model documents (writs, motions, etc.) on a range of relevant legal issues. | FY 17-22 |
| Annually, develop a Contract for Public Defender Services that sets salaries within Board approved ranges for all District Defenders and which considers prior year job performance providing client-centered representation. R.S. 15:161 (A). | FY 17-22 |

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| Develop annual contracts between LPDB and Program Directors to provide client-centered representation, and provide for other responsibilities. | FY 17-22 |
| Develop and promulgate Louisiana Performance Standards for Representation in Families in Need of Services (FINS) cases, and support the ongoing evaluation of the utilization of these standards in the field. | FY 17-22 |
| Undertake regular site visits in districts/programs across Louisiana to evaluate office functionality and attorney performance per a formal staff protocol, including follow-up visits as needed. | FY 17-22 |
| In actual or threatened litigation, take appropriate steps to appropriately fulfill the state's obligation to provide the right to counsel. | FY 17-22 |

Goal #2: LPDB will cultivate a technologically proficient defender community that utilizes up-to-date, data-driven practices in its case management and systemic advocacy.

Objective 2-1: Provide ongoing training to all data entry personnel in public defender offices in Louisiana.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Maintain and monitor the Issue Tracker System for data entry personnel to make request, provide feedback or solicit support. . | FY 17-22 |
| Provide regional trainings for data entry personnel on a regular basis. | FY 17-22 |
| Update materials/tutorials on the Case Management System, database management, excel documents and other relevant/requested software. | FY 17-22 |
| Solicit evaluations of the Case Management System and Case Management System support from data entry personnel in public defender offices in Louisiana. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 2-2: Continuously supervise district/program compliance with data collection policies to improve the accuracy and depth of data collected through the Case Management System.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Develop a protocol to uniformly evaluate a district public defender office's/program's case reporting accuracy, and take corrective action. | FY 17-22 |
| Notify defenders of CMS changes. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 2-3: Provide technical assessments, recommendations and support for defenders, investigators, mitigation specialists and other staff in Louisiana.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Improve, maintain and monitor usage of a secure, password protected, web-based writ, motion, and training resource repository for defenders, investigators, mitigation specialists and other staff. | FY 17-22 |
| Maintain an office library that archives relevant materials and a video-archive of mandatory trainings for use by the defender community to utilize the resources at the LPDB office. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 2-4: Identify and procure enabling technology (hardware and software) for the LPDB board members and staff in compliance with state regulations.

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Create a file retention policy for the management of casefiles and identify the required technology/capacity for districts to comply. | FY 17-22 |
| Maintain familiarity with new technology, state procurement laws, and professional development opportunities to continuously maximize LPDB's technological capacity. | FY 17-22 |
| Raise awareness of technology deficiencies through state annual reports and budget submissions. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 2-5: Facilitate, maintain and improve communication between the field and LPDB.

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Maintain a relevant, timely, attractive and accessible website for practitioners and members of the LPDB Board of Directors. | FY 17-22 |
| Manage a juvenile defender listserv to maximize cross-district learning and foster professional relationships among the defender community. | FY 17-22 |
| Manage an investigator/mitigation specialist defender listserv to maximize cross-district learning and foster professional relationships among the defender community. | FY 17-22 |
| Hold office hours for line defenders and defender staff in district offices throughout the state. | FY 17-22 |
| Maintain and improve relevant information in the LPDB Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). | FY 17-22 |

Goal #3: LPDB will create a statewide training system that develops, promotes, and supports the delivery of effective, high quality services.

Objective 3-1: Deliver trainings for all public defender personnel that promote the core agency values, engage highly qualified and compelling faculty, address relevant issues in the field, continually respond to the needs of practitioners, and are well attended.

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Continue to implement a standard, mandatory evaluation protocol from all participants, and utilize evaluations to improve future trainings. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve an annually recurring, best-practices, week-long training for new defenders. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve an annually recurring skills training on a recent development in case law or an identified deficiency in Louisiana defender practice. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve an annually recurring training for capital defenders and encourage attendance from all team members with active cases. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve a recurring training program to support investigators' delivery of legal defense services. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve a recurring training specifically dedicated to improving the Leadership and Management skills of defender-leaders. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve an annually recurring training dedicated to skills needed for delinquency representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Continually improve an annually recurring training dedicated to skills needed for CINC-Parent representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Partner with other criminal justice and social service stakeholders to provide training to address systemic reforms for criminal justice issues. | FY 17-22 |
| Develop training requirements for defenders as appropriate. | FY 17-22 |
| Create and continually improve an annually recurring training dedicated to skills needed for FINS representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Create and continually improve an annually recurring training focusing specifically on interdisciplinary sentencing advocacy skills development. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 3-2: Facilitate every region or local districts' development and implementation of a regular training program for local staff (with appropriate attention paid to juvenile defender training).

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Conduct a train-the trainers program for a specific area of representation. | FY 17-22 |

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| Dedicate LPDB staff resources to supporting District Defender- or Assistant Defender-initiated training programs. | FY 17-22 |
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Objective 3-3: Increase annual recruitment of both local and non-local law students into the public defender workforce in Louisiana, with special attention.

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Develop an LPDB fact sheet and other materials to promote the benefits of employment in the Louisiana public defender system. | FY 17-22 |
| Attend local/national job fairs and outreach events at the four Louisiana law schools, universities with criminal justice programs, national career fairs and other opportunities. | FY 17-22 |
| Support OSFA to administer Louisiana's John R. Justice Grant Program to provide loan forgiveness to eligible public defenders per federal and state regulations. | FY 17-22 |
| Create and maintain a list of LPDB trainings for public dissemination. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 3-4: Provide training on the changes to defense delivery and LPDB expectations when performance standards become effective through promulgation.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Provide training upon promulgation of the Trial Court Performance Standards for Appellate Representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Provide training upon promulgation of the Trial Court Performance Standards for Capital Representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Provide training upon promulgation of the Trial Court Performance Standards for FINS Representation. | FY 17-22 |
| Provide training upon promulgation of the Trial Court Performance Standards for Public Defense Investigation. | FY 17-22 |

Goal #4: LPDB will develop, cultivate and support leaders in each district office that share and promote LPDB's vision of standards-based, community oriented, data driven and client-centered legal representation, while respecting local variances in defense delivery mechanism.

Objective 4-1: Consistently train defender staff to deliver a model of defense services to indigent clients that complies with the mission and values of LPDB as well as national best-practices.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Provide and resource professional development opportunities to LPDB staff. | FY 17-22 |
| Support the development and district adoption of a formal, local orientation program that orients defenders to local policies, as well as LPDB training, CMS information, standards and other requirements. | FY 17-22 |
| Utilize clients as faculty members to promote client-centered relationships. | FY 17-22 |
| Cultivate a geographically diverse cadre of defender trainers to enhance the LPDB training program by promoting local commitment to shared values. | FY 17-22 |
| Provide recurring, evolving cultural competency training to defender staff. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 4-2: Provide resources (financial, human and technical) to defenders and defender leaders to support the transformation to client-centered public defense service delivery.

| Strategy | Timeline |
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| Create a "community defender toolkit" to encourage district offices/programs to improve their model of practice. | FY 17-22 |
| Replace all retiring/resigning District Defenders with persons who articulate and demonstrate a commitment to the LPDB vision of defense delivery, and provide supportive professional development opportunities (i.e. training, mentoring, etc.). | FY 17-22 |
| Fully implement the board-adopted client complaint policy that encourages client feedback of public defense delivery | FY 17-22 |
| Coordinate Advisory Councils that are responsive to local needs in the field and promote cross-district learning. | FY 17-22 |
| Ensure that all district public defender offices adopt appropriate anti-discrimination statements. | FY 17-22 |

Objective 4-3: Uniformly, all staff members at LPDB reflect and demonstrate through their work product the values expected of the district public defender offices/programs.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| The State Public Defender will regularly evaluate all staff on an annual basis, with appropriate involvement of the Public Defender Board or its personnel working group. | FY 17-22 |
| The State Public Defender will be regularly evaluated by all staff on an annual basis, and by the Public Defender Board or its personnel working group. | FY 17-22 |